

Frequently Asked Questions

Early Literacy Screeners

Alaska requires the use of literacy screening assessments in the early grades to ensure that all students are gaining the fundamental reading skills that are essential for building strong literacy skills through graduation. Screening helps to identify or predict students who may be a risk for poor learning outcomes before students fall significantly behind and remediation is needed. These brief, skill specific assessments provide teachers with the information they need to provide targeted instruction to students.

When did the requirement to use screening assessment go into effect?

The State Board of Education passed regulations requiring the use of early literacy screening assessments in June 2013.

To which students are the assessments to be given?

Districts are to administer an approved early literacy screening assessment to

- All students in kindergarten, first and second grades
- Third grade students identified as experiencing delays in attaining early literacy skills during the second grade

Do students with special needs participate in the literacy screeners?

All students should participate in the literacy screeners. The test administration guidelines will have specific guidance about accommodations for students with disabilities.

How often must the literacy screener be given?

Literacy screeners are designed to screen students' literacy skills in the fall, winter, and spring. The regulation requires that the screening assessment be given at least once annually between April 1 and May 30.

Which literacy screeners are approved for use and why?

The screener must

- accurately identify students experiencing delays in attaining early literacy skills;
- be individually administered;
- have an administration format that permits testing not less than three times per school year.

There are two options for screeners to choose from.

Option A includes AIMSweb, easyCBM, DIBELS, and STAR. These tools are approved because they have the following characteristics:

- Measures the early literacy sub-skills of letter sound fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency and oral reading fluency;
- Are individually administered;
- Yields data that includes the number of words read correctly in one minute

Option B includes NWEA MAP. This tool is approved because it has the following characteristics:

- Measures the literacy sub-skills of phonological awareness, phonics, concepts of print, vocabulary, word structure, and writing;

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- Permits data to be reported in Rasch units.

Can screening assessments other than those listed above be used to meet the regulation requirements?

No. The current list of screening assessments has been evaluated by the Center on Response to Intervention as moderate to strong for validity and reliability. The Center's evaluation of these screening tools can be found at the following link: <http://www.rti4success.org/resources/tools-charts/screening-tools-chart>.

Are districts required to use the same literacy screener for grades K, 1,2, and 3?

No. Districts are not restricted to the use of one screening tool.

Who administers the literacy screener?

This is a local decision. It may be administered by the classroom teacher, a specialist, or a team of teachers who assess all students.

How often do districts need to provide data to EED?

Once per year, following the spring testing window. Data must be submitted no later than July 15.

How will the data be reported?

More information will be provided soon regarding how the data will be reported to EED.

How will parents know about their child's assessment results?

Districts are required to share the data with parents not less than once annually for all tested students. For students experiencing delays, data should be shared not less than twice annually.

Are the funds to help districts with purchasing the assessments and providing data to EED?

Yes. District will be given a per student allocation based on their enrollment. There is no grant application; grants are automatically distributed to districts.